

Gurnee ■ Wadsworth ■ Gages Lake ■ Wildwood ■ Grayslake

YWCA honors eight Women of Achievement

■ **28th annual:**
Service, leadership
are recognized

By **Judy Masterson**
STAFF WRITER

LINCOLNSHIRE — A hospital CEO, a singer/songwriter and a civil rights activist were among eight women recognized during the YWCA Lake County's 28th annual Women of Achievement Awards.

Held Friday at the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort, the benefit spotlighted women whose service, achievement and leadership is a reflection of the YWCA's dedication to the empowerment of women and the elimination of racism.

YWCA Executive Director Liz Forbrich said the event offered the opportunity to hear the voices of women who embody the group's mission.

"By hearing these women, we get a sense of 'I can get up and do it too,'" Forbrich said.

Among those honored was Barbara Martin, president and CEO of Vista Health and Victory



Dong



Pollard



Kurek



Hammel



Roach



Lopez



Martin



Jones

Health Services, who received the Through the Glass Ceiling Award, given for not only breaking the glass ceiling, but also for providing help and mentorship to women along the way.

Martin, who was appointed chief of Vista in 2004, is credited with placing the hospital and its health services on a firmer financial footing and for brokering a deal with Community Health Systems to position the company for future growth.

Martin thanked her family and her staff, whom she credited with sharing her "passion for excellence."

"You're only as good as the people you surround yourself with," said Martin, who also attributed her success to "the overall optimism I carry as I walk into every day."

Singer/songwriter and music producer Joan Hammel of Wild-

wood was honored for her achievement in the arts, including her service on the first all-female officer team of the Grammy Awards Board of Chicago, for entertaining U.S. troops and for sharing the stage with the likes of Tony Bennett, David Sanborn and Koko Taylor.

"I am grateful for the brave and courageous women who came before me and on whose shoulders I stand," Hammel said.

Karen Jones of Gurnee won in the category of science and technology. She has held positions in clinical research and quality at Abbott Laboratories for the past two decades and currently chairs the Employee and Leadership Development Committee for Abbott Women Leaders in Action. She also assists in Abbott's efforts to attract and retain African-American talent.

Jones thanked her mother, Yvonne Jones, who she said taught her that coming from disadvantaged circumstances doesn't have to be a barrier to success, but "merely identifies where you come from and how far you've traveled."

Jones pointed to mentorship as a crucial factor in her success.

"Helping others to reach their goals is what truly makes me successful," she said.

Other Women of Achievement include:

■ Peggy Roach of Waukegan, a posthumous recipient of the Dr. Dorothy I. Height Racial Justice Award, for her work in the struggle for civil rights as an official of the National Council of Catholic Women, including the Wednesdays in Mississippi effort of 1964, for her efforts to counteract real

estate "red lining" in Chicago and to regulate the pay day loan industry. Roach died April 20.

■ Christine Lopez of Antioch, who accepted the Promise Award given to a young woman who has exhibited potential for extraordinary leadership. Lopez, a native of Waukegan and former Zion-Benton High teacher, is a coordinator of student recruitment at Rosalind Franklin medical school in North Chicago. She developed a drug prevention program for high school students, co-founded Delta Xi Phi, the nation's first multicultural sorority and has volunteered in efforts on behalf of minorities and youth.

■ DeRionne Pollard, recognized for her efforts in education, is vice president of educational affairs at the College of Lake County, Grayslake. Pollard, of Lindenhurst, developed CLC's Excellence for

Teaching and Learning, implemented the school's Academic Quality Improvement Project, and works in support of women's and diversity issues.

■ Katherine Dong, winner in the Public Service category, for her efforts on behalf of veterans. A speech pathologist at the North Chicago VA Medical Center, Dong manages a program aimed at meeting the particular needs of women veterans and developed proposals for two joint incentive projects with Naval Hospital Great Lakes.

■ Lindsey Kurek, awarded the Dr. Minnie J. Leggette Young Woman of Achievement Scholarship. Kurek is a senior at Lake Zurich High School where she is involved in the National Honor Society, Student Council and Future Business Leaders of America.

Founded in Waukegan in 1922 as a house for young women, YWCA Lake County offers a wide array of programs designed to meet the needs of women and girls. Corporate sponsors include: Allstate Insurance, Cardinal Health, Baxter International, Kraft Foods, McMaster-Carr Supply Co., U.S. Bank and Walgreens.